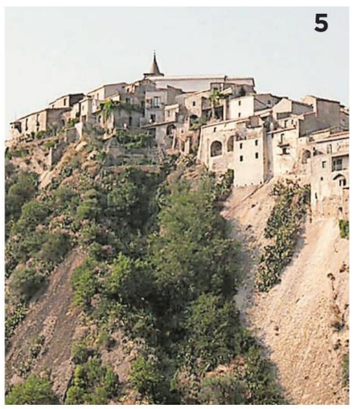

(1) Sicily's famous ancient Greek theatre at Taormina

(2) Judge Giovanni Falcone

(3) Judge Paolo Borsellino

(4) Salvatore Toto Riina as a young man

(5) Riina's birthplace at Corleone, Sicily

Photos: Thinkstock/Getty/PA

FAMILY

Beneath the surface an even more profound, long-lasting opposition to the men of honour and their political guarantors in Rome had begun to coalesce.

One relative, a teacher in a local state school, told us of an initiative set up by her colleagues to encourage each class to 'adopt' a historic building or monument.

The idea was to imbue young Sicilians with a sense of ownership over their island's proud heritage, while providing a practical means to looking after its historical infrastructure, suffering from years of both government neglect and the siphoning of state funds into the pockets of the Mafia.

A few years later young shopkeepers, hoteliers and businessmen, fed up of paying protection money – known as *il pizzo* – to their neighbourhood's respective clans, formed a boycott movement.

Defying death threats, dozens began refusing to pay, with at least one, Libero Grassi, killed in retaliation in 1991.

In 2004 five graduates who wanted to open a bar in Palermo decided instead to organise the *Addiopizzo* movement against the practice of paying protection money.

Frustrated with the Mafia's stranglehold on the local economy and political life, they plastered the city with stickers designed to mimic the ubiquitous Sicilian death notices, reading: "A whole people who pays the *pizzo* is a people without dignity."

By 2007, the movement had the support of more than 200 traders and entrepreneurs and over 9,000 consumers pledged themselves to buy only at shops belonging to the 'pizzo-free' list.

The boycott, which my cousins and others had long practiced in private, had burst into the open and found a public voice. The people behind these initiatives where the thousands of decent Italians who, over the decades, had provided a counter to the country's culture of endemic corruption and nepotism. They were leftists, conscientious professionals, trade unionists, brave priests, idealistic students and honest businessman. They were, in short, people like my family.

Little wonder that I have never been fully comfortable with the romanticisation of the Mafia in films such *The Godfather*.

For all his cinematic bravura and ability to capture the family milieu and stifling codes of honour of a US Mafia clan, with its symbiotic ties to the old country, Francis Ford Coppola did a huge disservice to those Sicilians who had long stood against Cosa Nostra.

The Godfather Part III contained a particular calumny. One scene shows a group of peasants welcoming a Mafia don to their village holding a hammer and sickle banner of the Partito Communista Italiano; a visual sleight of hand implying that one of the very organisations that, from its outset, had demonstrated the strongest rejection of the Mafia, lent its support to the criminal organisation

Indeed from the moment it reasserted itself on the island after the fall of Mussolini, with some the help from the occupying US authorities, the Mafia had targeted Communist activists and their supporters.

From the Portella della Ginestra massacre of peasants protesting for land reform, on May Day 1947, to the murder of the Communist Party's regional secretary Pio della Torre in April 1982, the Mafia always had the organised Left in its sights.

Cosa Nostra's influence persists, but fortunately opposition to the Mafia mindset still governs the personal behaviour of many Italians.

To this day, after decades living in Britain, my mother is reluctant to accept freebies or offers of favouritism, for fear of slipping into the old Italian habit of *clientelismo* – the exchange of favours in return for influence and power.

So when yet another person cracks a joke about my Sicilian family and horses' heads I can say hand on heart: *No, qui non siamo tutti Mafiosi*, "No, we're not all in the Mafia".

■ Patrick Sawer is a senior reporter on the *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph*

FINDING THE ROOTS OF FIZZ

The words champagne and prosecco both give a nod to the drinks' origins. But **PETER TRUDGILL** traces them back even further

It is rather well known that champagne is called after the wine-growing Champagne area of northeastern France.

The name of the area itself came originally from the Latin word *campania*, 'field, open country'. Via Italian *campagna* and French *campagne*, *campania* also gave us English *campaign*, which came to refer specifically to a battlefield, and thus by extension to military operations.

Latin *campania* was derived from *campus* 'field'. The French word *champs*, as in Champs Elysées 'Elysian Fields', is the modern French descendant of Latin *campus*. The Italian equivalent *campo* was also borrowed into French as *camp*, and from there it came into English in the early 1500s, originally with the meaning of a military camp.

The originally American term *campus* for 'grounds of a university or college' was borrowed directly from Latin in the late 18th century by Princeton University and adapted to the specialised academic meaning we are now familiar with.

It was not used in Britain until the late 1950s – the older British universities did not have campuses. I remember not knowing what campus meant when I first encountered it in an American novel in 1964.

It is probably less well known that the name of that popular competitor of champagne, the Italian sparkling wine prosecco, is also derived from a topographical term referring to open land.

The name has nothing at all to do with the Italian word *secco*, 'dry'. In fact, *prosecco* was not originally an Italian word at all.

It's true that there is a little disagreement about this, but it seems more or less certain that the name originally came from the village of Prosecco, which is now part of Trieste, in northeastern Italy.

The city of Trieste has a very multilingual history. Its earliest known local language was a form of Friulian, a Latin-descended Romance language related to Italian and, more closely, to the Swiss language Romansch.

As the power of Venice grew, this was gradually replaced by Venetian, a language more closely related to Italian, and this forms the basis of Trieste's current urban dialect. Trieste was also part of the Austrian Empire for more than five hundred years, and was its only major sea-port, so German established an important presence there, too.

But, crucially, Trieste has, for many centuries, also been located in the zone where the western Romance-speaking area of Europe meets the South Slavic languages, with Slovenian (also called Slovene) and Croatian being its closest neighbours. There are many Slovenian speakers (with their own Trieste dialect) in the city, as well as elsewhere in northeastern Italy, and a daily newspaper in Slovenian called the *Primorski Dnevnik* 'Coastal Journal' is published there.

Trieste was only confirmed in its post-Second World War status as part of Italy in 1954, and its borders with the neighbouring Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia were not determined precisely until 1975.

The village of Prosecco was originally called Prosek, a Slovenian dialect name. (German speakers from time to time called it Proseck or Prossegg.) Prosek is derived from the historic Slavic verb root *sek-* meaning 'cut, slash, hack' and the Slavic prefix *pro-* meaning 'through', so *proseka* meant 'something cut through'. It typically referred to a strip of land cleared in a forest to provide access, or to mark a boundary, or to act as a fire break. The modern Standard Slovenian variant is *preseka*.

Because it was a common practice in earlier times to build settlements in forest clearings, the name is found as a toponym in many Slavic speaking areas. There is an area of Prague called Prosek; and there are Russian and Ukrainian villages called Proseka, as well as Polish settlements named Przesieka. So Slovenian Prosek, now Triestine Prosecco, is just one of many such places originally built in a forest clearing.

But it is the only one that has achieved global fame, if only indirectly, in the alcohol-drinking world.

DISSECTION

The ancient Slavic form *sek-*, which still survives in Prosecco, had the same prehistoric origin as the *sec-* in the Latin word *secare*, 'to cut'. We have borrowed this Latin form into English in words like *dissect*, *bisect*, *intersect*, *section*, which all have to do with cutting in some way or other.